



## BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH

USSR  
General of the Army Dmitriy Timofeyevich YAZOV  
June 1988

(U) NAME: General of the Army (US General) Dmitriy Timofeyevich Yazov (YA-soff), Army.

(U) POSITION: Minister of Defense since May 1987. Replaced Marshal of the Soviet Union Sergey Leonidovich Sokolov.

(U) SIGNIFICANCE: General of the Army Yazov's selection as Minister of Defense was unexpected. It had been rumored for some months that Minister of Defense Sokolov would be replaced; however, Yazov was not believed to be a front runner. Yazov was picked by Gorbachev to ensure "perestroika" ("restructuring") takes place in the military. As Deputy Minister of Defense for Personnel since January 1987, Yazov had been in charge of implementing personnel changes in the military.



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(U) General Yazov's rise to the position of Minister of Defense occurred after a 19 year old West German violated Soviet airspace and piloted a single engine plane from Finland to Red Square. The incident was an embarrassment to the leadership, because it suggested weaknesses in Soviet air defense capabilities. The incident triggered the retirement of Minister of Defense Solokov. The Politburo also fired Commander-in-Chief of the Air Defense Forces Marshal Aleksandr Koldunov. The appointment of General Yazov represents a break in traditional career patterns. In the post-war period, professional military men given the top MOD post have been promoted from one of the first deputy minister positions. Yazov was vaulted over several more senior contenders.

(U) General Yazov is a 1967 graduate of the General Staff Academy. One of his classmates is Marshal of the Soviet Union Sergey Akhromeyev, First Deputy Minister of Defense and Chief of the General Staff.

(U) POLITICS: Member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union since 1944; Deputy to the Council of Nationalities, USSR Supreme Soviet, 1979; Candidate member of the Central Committee, March 1981, 1986; Delegate to the 26th CPSU Congress June 1981.

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(U) AWARDS AND DECORATIONS: In November 1973, awarded an unspecified honorary certificate for faultless service in the armed forces of the USSR. Foreign Decorations: In 1980 was presented the Medal of the Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship Association.

(U) PUBLISHED MATERIALS:

Article concerning role of staff and administrative officers in aiding unit commanders with problems of administration and organization. Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star--KZ), 7 August 1962.

Co-author of the article "Training in Night Firing." Voyennyy Vestnik (Military Herald), No. 11, November 1965.

Authored an article about the attitude toward official duties. KZ, 2 April 1978.

Authored an article about the training year. KZ, 23 November 1979.

Report to 26th CPSU Congress excerpted. Znamenosets (Standard Bearer), No. 6, June 1981, pp. 10-11.

Authored an article about construction of new military posts and remote garrisons in the steppe. KZ, 24 November 81.

"A Sense of the New: Carrying Out the Decisions of the 26th CPSU Congress." KZ, 24 November 81.

"Proper Order Indoctrinates." Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil (Communist of the Armed Forces--KVS), No. 6, March 1984.

"The Great Exploit of the Soviet People." Kommunist Tadzhikistana (Tadzhikistan Communist), 9 May 1984.

Authored an article concerning Komsomol work. KZ, 12 June 84.

"Personally Responsible for Discipline and Order." KVS, No. 15, August 1985.

Authored an article about the importance of having close contact with subordinates in political and military work. KZ, 17 October 1985.

"The Military Doctrine of the Warsaw Pact is the Doctrine of the Defense of Peace and Socialism." Pravda (Truth), 27 July 1987.

On Guard Over Socialism and Peace. Military Publishing House, October 1987.

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"Decisions of the 27th CPSU Congress in Life." Voenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal, (Military Historical Journal), No. 7, July 1987.

"An Army born of Great October." Zolnierz Wolnosci (Soldier of Freedom), 22 February 1988.

CAREER:

1942 - Identified as a Lieutenant and Deputy Commander of the 483rd Rifle Regiment. Completed an accelerated course at an infantry school (Now Moscow Higher Combined-Arms Command School) and assigned to the Volkhov Front.

1956 - Graduated from the Frunze Military Academy.

1965-1967 - Identified as a Colonel, 1965. Student at the Soviet General Staff Academy, graduating in 1967.

- 1976-1979 - First Deputy Commander of the Far East Military District. Identified as General-Colonel, 1978.
- 1979 - Commander of the Central Group of Forces, Czechoslovakia, replacing General-Colonel Dmitriy Sukhorukov in January; spoke at a military council meeting on improving soldiers physical fitness, March; attended joint training meeting of Soviet and Czechoslovakian units, April; briefer at scientific-theoretical conference, August; spoke at a meeting held on the occasion of the 62d anniversary of the October Revolution, November.
- 1981 - Commander of the Central Asian Military District, January.
- 1982 - Spoke at the Red Banner Asian Military District Komosomol Conference, February; delivered a briefing entitled "Strong in Leninist Friendship," March; attended an exercise by motorized rifle regiment personnel, April; spoke at the graduation of Alma-Ata Higher Combined-Arms Command School, August; received delegation of Afghanistan armed forces, September.
- 1983 - Delivered a speech at a meeting of the Kirghiz SSR party.
- 1984 - Promoted to General of the Army, February; presented medals to a group of generals and other officers for success in combat and political training, maintaining high troop readiness, and mastering sophisticated combat equipment. Commander of the Far East Military District, July 1984.
- 1987 - In January, Yazov relinquished command of the Far East Military District and was appointed Deputy Minister of Defense for Personnel. He replaced 73 year old General of the Army Ivan Nikolayevich Shkadov. In May, following the removal of Marshal of the Soviet Union Sokolov, General Yazov was appointed Defense Minister.
- 1988 - Addressed a meeting to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Soviet Army and Navy, February. Received the visiting Vietnam People's Army delegation, February. Traveled to Switzerland to met with U.S. Secretary of Defense Carlucci, March. Met with Army General Heinz Kessler East German Minister of Defense in Berlin, May. Met with U.S. Defense Secretary Carlucci in Moscow, May.